



Office of U.S. Rep. George Nethercutt

Washington's 5th District

223 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: April Gentry

(202) 225-2006

Cuba buys \$1 million in peas from Washington state

More sales possible in September, Nethercutt says

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. George R. Nethercutt Jr. (R-Wash.) announced today that Cuba is in the midst of purchasing \$1 million in peas from Washington state producers, the first such sale since the imposition of an embargo that has lasted 40 years.

"The deal is all but signed," Nethercutt said of the sale of 3,000 metric tons of Washington state peas. "Tight supplies kept this from being a larger sale. I'm hopeful that Cuba will purchase more peas after this year's crop is harvested in August," he continued, noting that more orders could shrink supplies and raise the price of the commodity, which is good news for farmers.

Nethercutt was the sponsor of the Trade Sanctions Reform Act, signed in to law in October 2000, which lifted unilateral food and medicine sanctions on Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea and Sudan. After an extensive consultative process, final regulations permitting sales were approved in July 2001. Initial sales to Cuba occurred in December 2001, with total announced purchases amounting to more than \$70 million. Cuba announced intentions in March to purchase approximately 20,000 metric tons of dry peas from Washington state.

"Rep. Nethercutt was instrumental in pushing through sanctions relief which opened the door to make this sale to Cuba possible. He has been a tremendous supporter in this process," said Tim McGreevy, executive director of the U.S.A. Dry Pea and Lentil Council.

Nethercutt praised McGreevy and the Council for their work to push the sale through. "The U.S.A. Dry Pea and Lentil Council has worked tirelessly every step of the way to see that this sale is completed. They deserve credit for making it happen."

"This sale gives us one million more reasons why we need to improve our commercial relations with Cuba. Our struggling state economy needs new market opportunities, and this sale shows that lifting embargoes can provide a tangible benefit to our agriculture producers," Nethercutt concluded.

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